

**NOTE:** A revised RFI is posted on the Arkansas HIE website: [www.recovery.arkansas.gov/hie](http://www.recovery.arkansas.gov/hie)

See the revised RFI document posted on the website for specific clarifications and revisions to the Terms and Conditions, Section 3, page 2.

## **RFI Questions and Answers from Vendor Respondents:**

1. Is there a vendor conference call, or are all RFI questions submitted via email?

There will be no vendor conference for this RFI. All questions submitted will be answered via email and posted on the HIE website: [www.recovery.arkansas.gov/hie](http://www.recovery.arkansas.gov/hie).

2. Will a copy of the RFI document be made available in Microsoft Word® format?

A Microsoft Word® version of the RFI document is available on the HIE website.

3. Is RFI participation required for subsequent RFP participation? (If we do not respond to the RFI, will we be precluded from responding to a later RFP?)

The Office of State Procurement clarified that a response to the RFI is not required in order to participate in any future RFP which may be released.

4. In what format should the vendor response with intent to respond to the RFI be submitted?

All responses to this RFI should be submitted electronically by email, or attachment of documents to an email sent to: [alison.nicholas@hit.arkansas.gov](mailto:alison.nicholas@hit.arkansas.gov)

5. How will Arkansas plan to handle ARRA requirements from the Federal government? Will the State of Arkansas complete these requirements or assign that to the contractor?

The ultimate responsibility for compliance with federal ARRA reporting requirements rests with the State of Arkansas. However, the State of Arkansas will require contractors and subcontractors to comply with any and all reporting requirements necessary for the State to track and monitor the fiscal management of ARRA funds for reporting purposes.

6. How many active providers (e.g. physicians, hospitals, other) should be used for estimating purposes in the HIE?

There are more than 65,000 licensed health services providers in the state and 103 licensed hospitals. Through a phased implementation process, the ultimate goal is for the statewide HIE to exchange information across all participating health services providers and agencies.

7. How are these providers distributed across the state? Is there a graphic representation of Arkansas providers based on numbers?

## RFI Questions from Vendor Respondents

Providers are distributed across the state with a higher concentration in Central and Northwest Arkansas. A graphic display of the distribution of health services providers is available on the Arkansas Department of Health website at <http://www.healthyarkansas.com/data/data.html>.

8. From the RFI, it is clear that the submitted information will be distributed, analyzed, and utilized for productive purposes by SHARE. Under Arkansas FOIA laws, can information submitted be used only by SHARE and not accessible to other potential competitors?

Arkansas Code Annotated Section 25-19-105(b)(9)(A) contains the pertinent exemption to the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act: "Files that if disclosed would give advantage to competitors or bidders and records maintained by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission related to any business entity's planning, site location, expansion, operation, or product development and marketing, unless approval for release of those records is granted by the business entity."

9. On page 7, Section 5.2 refers to describing each element from Section 4 including: 1) Interoperability; 2) Technical Architecture and Approach; 3) Design Principles; 4) Architectural Overview; and 5) Core requirements. I see four main elements in Section 4 of the RFI. Should Section 4 include an element on the architectural overview, or is Section 5.2 referring to the four elements of Section 4 and requiring an additional element, called Architectural Overview?

The "Architectural Schematic" graphic represents the "Architectural Overview" element of the response requirements presented in Section 5.2.

10. Per Section 4.3, Design Principles and Requirements, the HIE will support construction and aggregation of the longitudinal patient record for secure sharing among authorized users across the network. Are PACS images (Radiology, MRI, etc.) included in the definition of health information? If so, will the PACS images require encryption?

Currently it is not our intent to support diagnostic quality PACS image transmission as part of the HIE services. However, images as well as other data transmitted via the HIE will require adequate security protections which may include encryption.

11. Can you provide additional clarification and/or examples of Item 6 of the required responses entitled, "Description of the financial models supported"?

SHARE wants to know which financial models the proposed solution can support, i.e. a subscription model, transaction fee model, or utility model. A respondent may provide other examples of models supported by the proposed solution for the information purposes of this RFI.

12. What organization will be issuing the subsequent RFP for the HIE solution?

The Arkansas Office of Health Information Technology will issue the RFP in coordination with the Arkansas Office of State Procurement.

## RFI Questions from Vendor Respondents

13. Does the State prefer an externally hosted HIE solution? Should the response include an onsite HIE solution and a hosted solution?

At this stage, SHARE has not chosen an option. The purpose of this RFI is to gain knowledge of possible solutions and sourcing options. Respondents are free to provide information on any and all options that may be available.

14. Can you provide some assumptions regarding volumes of transactions, number of users, and the number of potential interfaces that would need to be implemented for the HIE solution that would assist in estimation of costs?

No such assumptions or estimates are available for the purposes of the RFI. Information being sought about cost models or strategies should be illustrative of, or examples of, how a vendor would typically cost out a particular solution, service, system, or component.

15. Can you provide some additional clarification as to your definition of “vendor neutral” as referenced on page 6 of the RFI?

“Vendor neutral” is a term intended to convey the idea that the HIE is interoperable and needs to facilitate the sharing of health information from and to any and all platforms. Therefore, the solution will be neutral with respect to the vendor solutions that may exist in a participant location or another HIE component. “Non-proprietary” is intended to mean that use of a particular solution from one vendor will not require all participants or components in the HIE to operate on any particular vendor product.

16. Can you provide a copy of the projected terms and conditions that would be associated with a subsequent RFP?

No. Any terms and conditions associated with the release of RFP documents will be developed specifically for that procurement and are not an issue related to this RFI process.

17. Who will be evaluating the subsequent RFP responses for selecting a statewide HIE solution?

If and when a procurement process is initiated with the release of a RFP document, an appropriate and qualified Bid Evaluation Committee will be established.

18. Can you provide a list of any existing regional or local HIE operation in the State?

No. There is no “list” of existing private exchanges operating in health care or health related organizations in Arkansas. There are a number of hospitals or hospital systems, clinical providers, and health insurers operating private exchanges to meet the information needs for their respective enterprises.

19. Are there any HIE’s in the State which are operational? If so, what kind and how many software platforms are being used (e.g. NHIN or other protocols)?

## RFI Questions from Vendor Respondents

No. There is no “list” of existing private exchanges operating in health care or health related organizations in Arkansas. There are a number of hospitals or hospital systems, clinical providers, and health insurers operating private exchanges to meet the information needs for their respective enterprises.

20. Does one hospital group dominate the hospitals within the State?

There are a number of hospitals and hospital systems that operate either multiple facilities around the state or primarily serve multi-county and/or regional geographical areas within the state.

21. What is the current level of computerization of the State Department of Health? Does it receive any information from providers electronically?

The Arkansas Department of Health is currently computerized, and it exchanges some information with providers electronically based upon state and Federal reporting requirements. The mechanisms and infrastructure of these exchanges are managed within each of the divisions/departments within the Department of Health.

22. Would the State clarify that the RFI is for information only and will not be a source of qualification for a HIE RFP that may be subsequently issued?

The RFI is for information only and will not be a source of qualification for an HIE RFP that may be subsequently issued.

23. Please clarify your high availability requirements. Do you anticipate a disaster recovery plan that includes highly automated dual site redundancy such that there is no extended discontinuity of web portal access and health information exchange transactions?

The planned availability of the HIE is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. Appropriate disaster recovery and redundancies will be required to ensure the uninterrupted availability of the health information exchange.

24. Please describe what role, if any, that SHARE will play in supporting and/or facilitating patient-centered medical home?

The Arkansas HIE will be developed to be expandable with the expectation of the SHARE being utilized to support patient-centered medical home as appropriate. The extent of this support and utilization has not been defined.

25. Would Arkansas like the respondents to address the inclusion of end user tools and adoption in our proposed HIE solution?

As the State HIE is in the planning and development stage, inclusion of information regarding end user tools would be valuable.

## RFI Questions from Vendor Respondents

26. Will vendor responses to the RFI be used as part of a “qualifying” process for the subsequent RFP being issued only to “qualified” vendors?

The responses to the RFI will be carefully reviewed for useful information to inform our current planning and development process, but will not be used as a basis for “qualification” to respond to a RFP.

27. In your Mandatory Response Requirements section 5.1 regarding “estimated cost of solution component”, do you want each solution included in our RFI response to actually be priced?

No, SHARE does not want solutions or components priced in the RFI response. What SHARE is asking for is information about your pricing strategies or approaches in “ballpark” terms or rough order of magnitude estimates with some explanation as to the basis for the estimates e.g., per site, per transaction, per connection or interface, etc.